

TOP TIPS FOR UROSTOMATES

Urine Samples

Most urostomates are unable to obtain a urine sample taken via a catheter, direct from the stoma. However there are other ways of obtaining a clean sample that are acceptable.

- Replace your current pouch, ensuring that you thoroughly clean the stoma with clean water. Once the pouch has filled slightly, empty the contents into a sample bottle.
- Remove the pouch and wipe the stoma with clear water. Hold a small sterile dish beneath the stoma and when sufficient has been collected, decant into a sample bottle. The dish can be sterilised with Milton and used the next time a sample is required.

Bleeding around the Stoma

Don't be surprised if a little blood appears when you clean your stoma. It is quite normal for the stoma to bleed slightly from the outside, due to the blood vessels being very superficial and easily damaged – this bleeding will stop after a few minutes.

However if you notice blood coming out of your stoma aperture, contact your GP or Stomal Therapy Nurse as soon as possible. This bleeding will probably be caused by a urinary infection and will easily be cleared up, but it must be investigated.

Diet

Urostomates usually enjoy a completely normal diet. It is helpful to create an acidic urine pH, that helps to prevent infection and to assist this process cranberry juice and bio or live yoghurt are excellent. The top tip, however, is to drink lots of water.

Night Drainage Systems

- To avoid air in the night drainage system, connect the night bag to a pouch with a quantity of urine in it. Squeeze the urine through the night bag and the body pouch will then remain empty overnight.
- Reusable night bags must be washed thoroughly after each use.
- Vinegar or Dettol can be inserted using a syringe or small funnel and then agitated and flushed with warm water. It is acceptable to use just water.
- The simplest method for night drainage is to use disposable bags that are emptied and destroyed after each use.
- To avoid twisting of night drainage bags during the night, use either an anti-twist strip available from a manufacturer through your association or G Straps that fasten the tube of the bag to the leg. Extension tubes can also be used to provide greater length of the tube.
- Some people find a leg bag more convenient than a night bag for additional capacity. Most manufacturers have versions of this.
- Flat Pack Night Drainage Stands can be either freestanding or slid between the mattress and the base of the bed and are ideal for travelling. These are not listed on the Stoma Appliance Scheme and are available from Simpla/Coloplast for about \$6.40.

Travelling

- Always keep a night drainage bag in the glove compartment of your car to empty your bag when held up by traffic.
- To make seatbelts more comfortable over your stoma there are products available from the auto accessories parts stores. Some of the recommended products include "Klip Klunk", a hand operated cam plate that allows the seat belt to be locked in a comfortable position, but will release instantly when required. Or "Drop Links" designed to lower the position of the seat belt, and is particularly useful for shorter people, where the diagonal would cross the neck. Or "Pulla Belts", a simple sleeve addition to the belt for people who cannot reach the top anchorage point. Or "Clever Clip" designed to ease belt tension across the chest and reduce any restriction in breathing. It can also reduce pressure on the abdomen. (*Editor's Note: These exact brand names may not all be available in Australia but I have been assured that alternatives can readily be found*).
- When flying on long journeys, if you are concerned that your pouch will overfill, connect a night drainage bag concealed in a carrier bag, which can be discretely emptied later.

Leaks

Most urostomates will experience leakage at some time; however such an incidence is rare. It is recommended to carry a simple pack of spare items at all times. If leakage occurs with any frequency something is wrong and may be:

- The wrong type of appliance being used.
- An increase or decrease in weight.
- Your stoma may have changed shape.
- Your skin was not dried thoroughly before application of the bag.

Talk to your Stomal Therapist as soon as possible.

Miscellaneous

- Warm your bag against your body before application.
- After fitting a new bag, give it a "yank" to ensure it is fitting correctly.
- Taps on some appliances can be hard to open and close and a small amount of Vaseline rubbed around the bung can solve this problem.
- When using a stomahesive paste or similar product, wet your finger to avoid it sticking during application.
- Use a drop or two of one of the many pleasant smelling disinfectants in your bag.